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Agenda item 9
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-first session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Ayman M. **Elgammal** (Egypt)

Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

(item 4 (a))

Section 28. Internal oversight

1. At its 29th meeting, on 29 June 2001, the Committee considered section 28, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

2. The representative of the Secretary-General introduced section 28 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the activities undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Satisfaction was also expressed that a strategic review had been undertaken.

4. It was pointed out that the proposed programme budget fully covered the mandate of the Office and reflected the provisions of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005. The indicators of achievements under subprogramme 3, Monitoring and inspection, were in particular commended.

5. It was recalled that the evaluation function was intended to assist programme managers in conducting self-evaluations. It was asked when the revised evaluation

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manual would be issued. A question was also raised on how to improve the timing of consideration of evaluation reports by the intergovernmental bodies in order to eliminate the current lack of efficiency resulting from the delays between the issuance of evaluation reports and their reviews by intergovernmental bodies.

6. Concern was expressed at the steady increase in resources for the Office of Internal Oversight since its inception. It was also pointed out that the level of extrabudgetary resources had significantly increased since the biennium 1998-1999, and questions were raised concerning the sources of these resources. Concern was expressed at the increasing recourse to extrabudgetary funds. The establishment of a cost reimbursement mechanism with the funds and programmes was welcomed and it was expected that there would be reporting on its functioning in the future.

7. The Committee welcomed the coordination with external oversight bodies as a very positive element. However, it was pointed out that improvements to further harmonize the work of the different oversight bodies were still required in order to avoid duplication in their work.

8. Questions were raised concerning the role and involvement of the Office in information technology matters at the United Nations Secretariat.

9. It was pointed out that, in subprogramme 1 (Central evaluation), the indicator of achievement (b) in table 28.6 relative to better coordination with external oversight bodies should be modified. It was observed that the number of meetings does not necessarily reflect better coordination and that a more adequate indicator of achievement would be the number of joint projects and/or the number of agreements to undertake joint and/or complementary audits.

10. Regarding subprogrammes 1, 2 (Management consulting) and 3, questions were raised concerning the apportionment of resources among the three functions in the newly created Monitoring, Evaluation and Consulting Division.

11. In subprogramme 4 (Investigations), it was observed that new posts were requested to cope with the increased workload in investigation cases. It was, however, pointed out that an increase in posts does not necessarily lead to enhanced effectiveness. Additional questions were raised as to whether the benchmark of 30 new cases by investigators was a realistic one and whether the new posts would provide for enough resources to cope with the increasing workload. The view was also expressed that other means to improve work efficiency should be explored.

12. Finally, questions were raised concerning the removal of the Executive Office from the executive direction and management component into a separate programme support component.

Conclusions and recommendations

13. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 28, Internal oversight, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, subject to the following modifications:

Table 28.6

Under objective 1, replace indicator of achievement (b) with "The number of joint meetings, agreements and assignments with external oversight bodies".

Table 28.8

Merge the indicators of achievement (b) (i) and (b) (ii) to read "(b) Clear delegation of authority and the existence and effective use of mechanisms to ensure accountability at all levels of the Organization".

Replace the indicator of achievement (d) with "The number of joint meetings, agreements and assignments with external oversight bodies".